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### The University of Akron Faculty Senate Chronicle

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# Faculty Senate Chronicle for September 1, 2016

Jon Miller

*University of Akron*, [mjon@uakron.edu](mailto:mjon@uakron.edu)

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September 1, 2016

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## SENATE ACTIONS

- Elected Senator Miller to fill the remainder of the term of Secretary.
- Elected Senator Hausknecht to serve a two-year term on the Executive Committee.
- Elected Senator Schulze to serve a two-year term on the Executive Committee.
- Elected Senator Allen to serve a one-year term on Graduate Council.
- Postponed until October the election of one representative to Graduate Council.

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MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate took place Thursday, September 1, 2016 in room 201 of Buckingham. Senate Chair William D. Rich called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

Of the current roster of 46 Senators, 36 were present for this meeting. Senators Cutright, Gatzia, Hreno, Joy, Nofziger, and Samangy were absent with notice. Senators Braun, Mitchell, Quinn, and Veillete were absent without notice.

*I. Adoption of the Agenda*

Senator Gandee moved to adopt the agenda. Chair Rich noted the resignation of Senator Schulze as secretary. He sought and obtained unanimous consent to amend the agenda to add the election of a new secretary to serve for the remainder of her term. The agenda was adopted without dissent.

*II. Remarks of the Chairman*

Chair Rich remarked:

Welcome to the first meeting of the Faculty Senate for the new academic year.

We have a number of newly elected Faculty Senators, as well as some newly reelected Senators:

- From the College of Arts and Sciences, Connie Bouchard was reelected this Spring.
- From the College of Engineering,
  - Richard Elliott, Robert Veillette, and S.I. Hariharan were newly elected; and
  - Minel “Jack” Braun was reelected.
- From the College of Education, Huey Li Li was newly elected.
- From the College of Business Administration, Marcus Brava Alvez was newly elected.
- From the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering,
  - Mark Soucek and Abraham Joy were newly elected; and
  - William Landis was reelected.
- From the School of Law, Dana Cole was newly elected.
- From the retired faculty,
  - Ali Hajjafar was newly elected; and
  - Robert Gandee was reelected.
- Megan Bodenschatz and Sterling Galehouse represent the undergraduate students this year.

Congratulations and welcome or welcome back, as the case may be, to these new and returning Faculty Senators.

We await the completion of run-off elections in the College of Arts and Sciences, which has eight seats remaining to be filled; the College of Applied Science and Technology, which has three seats remaining to be filled; and the College of Health Professions, which has two seats remaining to be filled. I encourage Senators from those

colleges to impress upon the deans of their respective colleges the need to complete those run-off elections expeditiously so that those vacancies are filled before the October Senate meeting.

For the information of those who are new to the Faculty Senate, and as a reminder to those who are not: The Faculty Senate is the legislative body of the faculty at the university level. Its meetings are relatively formal and are conducted according to its bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order. If you wish to address the body, please hold up your name tag to seek the recognition of the chair, and please be sure that your name is facing the chair, not you, and is right-side up, horizontal, and stationary so that it can be read by the chair. Please do not speak until recognized by the chair. If I should fail to say your name when recognizing you, please state it when you begin to speak so that your remarks may be properly attributed in the record. This meeting is being transcribed. Please do not make noise that may make it difficult for the transcriber to hear the proceedings. When you speak, please bear in mind that your remarks will be transcribed for all the world to see. If you have not already done so, please sign one of the posted attendance sheets so that your presence may be properly recorded.

Among the items on today's agenda are the ratification of two actions taken by the Executive Committee acting in the place of the Senate over the summer: the approval of the August graduation list; and the approval of several curriculum change proposals. Also on the agenda are the election of someone to fill the vacancy in the office of Secretary of the Faculty Senate; the election of two members of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate; and the election of two Faculty Senators to serve as members of the Graduate Council.

There have been several significant developments since the Senate last met. As you know, Scott Scarborough resigned his presidency of the University at the end of May and Matthew Wilson, Dean of the University's School of Law, was appointed Interim President on July 11<sup>th</sup>. During the period between Dr. Scarborough's resignation and Dean Wilson's appointment as Interim President, Interim Senior Vice President and Provost Rex Ramsier acted as President of the University.

For the two years immediately preceding his appointment as Interim President, Matt Wilson was my dean. I hold him the highest esteem as a leader, academic administrator, and colleague.

As I am sure President Wilson will explain shortly in his remarks, the University faces serious fiscal challenges, owing in part to the substantial drop in first-year undergraduate enrollment this year. I leave it to him to provide detail about the magnitude of the problem and the potential solutions to it.

In its regular meeting last May, the Senate passed a resolution calling for an immediate suspension of the so-called GenEd Core initiative – the offering of general education courses on-line at deeply discounted prices. The administration declined to suspend this initiative on the grounds that those courses had already been announced and students had already enrolled in them for the Fall Semester. It should be noted that this decision was made before Matt Wilson's appointment as Interim President. This is a matter about which I expect there will be further discussion in this body.

Later in the summer, Provost Ramsier and members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with members of the faculty from various colleges who had developed

and taught courses that were part of the GenEd Core initiative. Among the conclusions reached by this group of faculty members were that the courses were generally of high quality, but that in many instances the enrollments were too high; that for the most part these courses could not be taught effectively to classes larger than about twenty-five students; that some sections were taught by adjunct faculty with heavy teaching loads and other jobs; that some adjunct faculty members were not assigned to teach the courses until shortly before the beginning of the semester, which did not allow sufficient time for preparation; that all faculty newly teaching on-line courses should be required to undergo training; that the initiative was aimed at the wrong kinds of students, namely those who are new to college, especially those who have just completed high school and especially those whose preparation for college may be weak; that students ought in some way to be screened so that only those who are reasonably likely to succeed in on-line courses are enrolled in those courses; and that there ought to be a broader discussion among the faculty about the role of on-line education in the University.

In accordance with this last conclusion, I intend to propose the formation of an ad hoc Faculty Senate committee on on-line education. Unlike the Distance Learning Review Committee, whose role is to review particular curriculum change proposals that involve distance learning, this ad hoc committee would address the larger policy questions about the role of on-line education in the University. I think it important that this committee include not only proponents of on-line education, but skeptics as well.

This concludes my remarks.

### *III. Special Announcements*

Chair Rich read the following:

Alfred L. Anderson, Professor Emeritus of Music, died on June 18<sup>th</sup> at the age of 73. Professor Anderson taught voice and opera/lyric theater in the School of Music for 25 years. A wonderful baritone and active performer in his own right, he was a great influence on many students who went on to successful careers of their own.

Walter D. Lehrman, Professor Emeritus of English, died on May 26<sup>th</sup> at the age of 91. After serving in the Army Air Corps during World War II as a B-29 radio operator, he earned bachelor's and master's degrees in English from Columbia University. From 1951 until 1956, he taught at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1956, he joined the English faculty here at the University of Akron and completed his Ph.D. degree at Western Reserve University. He retired from the University in 1986.

Professor Lehrman was the author of *The Plays of Ben Johnson: A Reference Guide* (1980). He was active in community and political affairs, helping to organize the Akron fair housing campaign in the early 1960s, among many other things. He pioneered the introduction of black studies into the University of Akron curriculum. Recently, his personal photographs of Beat Generation poet and writer friends were acquired and published as a collection by Utah State University, Merrill-Cazier Library.

Professor Lehrman is fondly remembered by senior and retired faculty for having been a good mentor.

If I may add a personal note, I knew Walter early in my career at the University of Akron. I admired him for his tireless activism and commitment to social justice, and for his kindness and gentleness. He touched many lives and left his mark on the world.

Would you all please rise for a moment of silence in honor of our deceased colleagues.

#### *IV. Report of the Executive Committee*

Secretary Schulze reported:

Since the Faculty Senate last met on May 19, the Executive Committee met on four occasions by itself, once with the Gen Ed Core faculty, once with the Ernst & Young consultants, and twice with the Interim President and Interim Provost.

The Executive Committee (EC) met on June 9 with faculty involved in the Gen Ed Core initiative to discuss ways to enhance student success in those courses.

On June 16, the EC met with Ernst & Young consultants to discuss the University's fiscal situation.

The EC next met on June 30 for regular Senate business. We discussed progress on the Tiger team, and we certified the elections of Senator Bouchard from the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences and of Senators Hajjafar and Gandee representing retirees.

The EC next met on July 21 for regular Senate business and to prepare for the meeting with the Interim President and interim Provost. We adopted the motion to approve the graduation list. All curriculum proposals have been approved by the EC except for one, which is pending and that is Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Number 15-13095. Later that day, we met with the Interim President and Interim Provost. We discussed the issues raised in the Gen Ed Core meeting. We discussed progress on Zook Hall renovations. We discussed the progress made on Tiger team and budget issues. We discussed the University of Akron's communication strategy, its immediate staffing needs, and the importance of international programming on campus.

The EC next met on August 24 to prepare for the meeting with Interim President and Interim Provost, to prepare the agenda for the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting, and to conduct regular Senate business. The EC meeting with the Interim President and the Interim Provost covered the Gen Ed Core. We also discussed the report that was made as a result of the meeting with instructors and course designers, and the implications for how to best ensure student success. The EC was informed that the Zook Hall construction was complete. We were updated on Tiger team reports, timelines, and the president's vision. The University is committed to act on recommendations and report to the campus what has been accomplished. The recommendations of the Tiger team will be tasked to the appropriate University Council committees. We were updated on the University's commitment to consider approving searches for critical positions in fall 2016. We also discussed IT issues, the need for more personnel, the laptop refresh program, online course evaluations, and discussions about the possible replacement of PeopleSoft on campus. We discussed plans to recruit new advisors. We discussed adult focus and the possibility of working on evening programming on campus. We discussed new initiatives on campus and the need for those to be self-supporting; we learned that the EX L Center was funded for another year. We were updated on the non-endowed

scholarship rollout. Interim President Wilson is fundraising, although it has not yet been publicly announced.

Later that day, the EC met to plan for the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting and to conduct regular Senate business. We discussed which colleges still have vacant seats and the need to change college and university bylaws to allow the alternative of ranked choice voting, particularly in large colleges. The EC certified the elections of polymer sciences and polymer engineering Senators Joy, Landis, and Soucek. And we appointed new members to Senate committees. The EC appointed the following individuals to the Faculty Senate Research Committee: Jie Zheng from the College of Engineering, Dimitria Gatzia from Wayne College, Matt Wyszynski from Modern Languages and Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences and Xiong Gong from Polymer Sciences and Polymer Engineering and Peter Gordon from Math and Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences. The EC appointed the following individuals to the Academic Policies committee: Robert Veillette of the College of Engineering and Ali Hajjafar representing retired faculty. The EC voted to eliminate the ad hoc committee on Academic Centers and Institutes and Faculty Research as it has been inactive for some time. The EC made the following appointments to the University Council committees: we appointed Julie Cajigas to the Communications committee; we contacted Kate Clark to ask if she would be willing to serve on the Institutional Advancement committee. We discussed the upcoming orientation for new Senators. This concludes the Executive Committee's report.

#### *V. Remarks of the Interim President*

President Matthew Wilson spoke on his educational and professional background; his motivation; his experience as interim president over the last seven weeks; and challenges facing the University, with emphasis on our need to improve enrollment, retention, and our budget.

President Wilson invited Senators to ask questions.

Senator Elliott questioned the efficacy of "cheerleading" as a strategy for turning around the University's decline. He asked President Wilson if he would also look at facts; President Wilson assured the Senate that he would.

Senator Feltey spoke in favor of President Wilson's attention to the "care work" that faculty perform for the students. Senator Feltey asked if President Wilson will address problems associated with the retention of faculty. President Wilson responded that these problems will be addressed as part of serving our students.

Senator Cole invited President Wilson to relate the story of his tenure as dean of the law school. President Wilson described the recent, positive changes in enrollment and prestige.

Senator Landis praised President Wilson for the enthusiasm with which he promotes Akron and encouraged him to look for support and help in this area from the faculty. President Wilson described plans to enlist faculty volunteers in an upcoming recruiting campaign.

Senator Bouchard encouraged President Wilson to end the Gen Ed Core program on the grounds that it hurts our students and loses money for the University.



Senator Klein encouraged President Wilson to recognize and address the trouble the University has had retaining women faculty and faculty of color. Senator Klein asked for more support for international programs. President Wilson spoke of his extensive experience building successful international programs and his dismay with the inadequate staffing of the University's international program.

Senator Osorio asked President Wilson how part-time faculty could be further involved in the retention of students, given that they teach so many first-year courses. President Wilson expressed his belief that our first-year students should be taught by more of our best professors and spoke of our constrained financial resources.

Chair Rich noted that our part-time faculty pay has not increased in fifteen years and described this as indefensible.

#### *VI. Remarks of the Interim Senior Vice President and Provost*

Interim Senior Vice President and Provost Ramsier asked the Senate to look for several forthcoming communications: a report with recommendations from the Tiger Team and information about the February 2017 visit from the Higher Learning Commission. Provost Ramsier described the new process through which the University will assure the accreditors that we deserve reaccreditation.

Provost Ramsier made himself available for questions.

Senator Bouchard asked about the status of faculty lines, and Provost Ramsier noted that some searches failed for weak pools and some never came forward. Provost Ramsier noted that some needs must be addressed for accreditation purposes.

#### *VII. Senate Elections*

Senator Bouchard nominated Senator Miller to fill the term as secretary. Senator Miller accepted the nomination. Senator Matejkovic moved to close nominations and elect Senator Miller by acclamation. The motion was adopted without dissent.

Senator Matejkovic nominated Senator Hausknecht to serve a term on the executive committee. Senator Hausknecht accepted the nomination. Senator Kidd moved to close nominations and elect Senator Hausknecht by acclamation. The motion was adopted without dissent.

Senator Coffey nominated Senator Schulze to serve a term on the executive committee. Senator Schulze accepted the nomination. Senator Clark moved to close nominations and elect Senator Schulze by acclamation. The motion was adopted without dissent.

Chair Rich proposed to postpone the election of someone to succeed Senator Sterns as a representative to Graduate Council until October, with the hope that the College of Arts & Sciences will successfully conclude their process of run-off elections before then. There was no objection to this proposal.

Senator Hajjafar nominated Senator Allen for the second vacancy. Senator Allen accepted the nomination. Senator Landis moved to close nominations and elect Senator Allen by acclamation. The motion was adopted without dissent.

*VI. Report from Faculty Senate Representatives to University Council*

Senators Roy and Allen deferred to Harvey Sterns, who spoke on the University Council's intention to implement all of its full functions now that its by-laws have been approved by the University's Board of Trustees.

*VIII. New Business*

There was no new business.

*IX. Good of the Order*

No remarks were made for the good of the order.

*IX. Adjournment*

Meeting was adjourned at 4:41 pm.

Any comments concerning the contents in The University of Akron Chronicle may be directed to the Secretary, Jon Miller (x6202). [facultysenate@uakron.edu](mailto:facultysenate@uakron.edu)